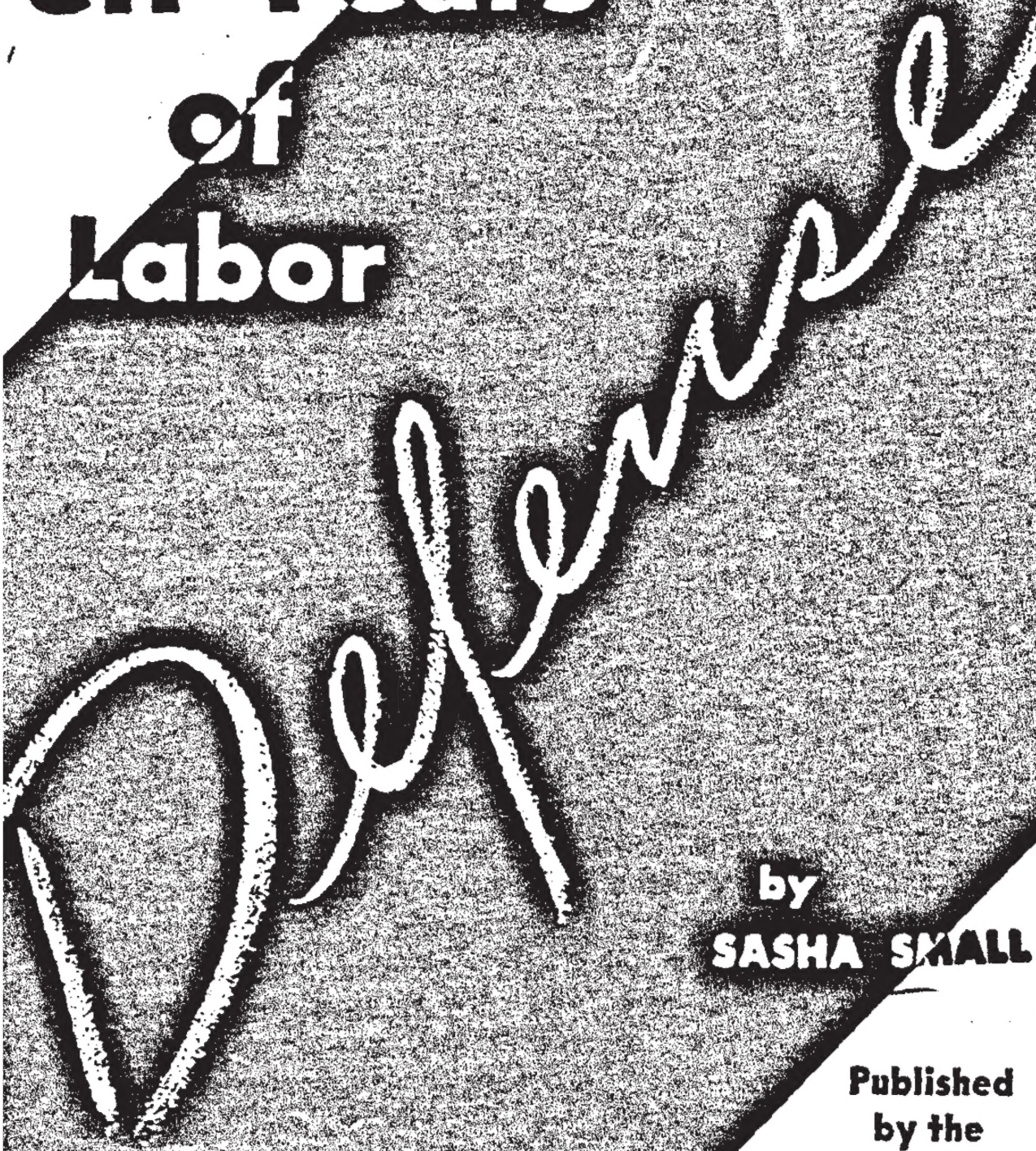


# **Ten Years of Labor**



**by  
SASHA SMALL**

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Labor Defense**

**5¢**



"The I.L.D. has an impressive record, of which it can be proud, not only in the struggle against the reaction, in the United States, but in the campaign against the terror in fascist countries, particularly in the campaign developed around the Leipzig trial. The fascist terror in Germany, Austria and Spain has already cost the lives of countless victims—Communists, Socialists and other anti-fascist fighters. The lives of thousands of others are threatened, and especially the life of the best leader of the German proletariat, Ernst Thaelmann.

"I hope that the I.L.D. will find the strongest support among all sections of the working class, students, intellectuals, all those who want to fight fascism, to strengthen the struggle to snatch the proletarian fighters out of the hands of the executioners. Let the thunder of mass protest be heard again, as it was during the Leipzig trial!"

Comradely Greetings,

*J. Dimitroff*

"More members. Get them black, red, brown, yellow and white if they are good enough to work for men behind prison bars and their needy mothers, wives, and children.

"One who has been placed in jeopardy as I have been most keenly feels the power of organization. It is to an expression of solidarity on the part of the workers that I owe my life."

*Wm. J. Harrison*  
Pamphlet Collection  
Duke University Library

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## I. OUR HERITAGE

A slim Negro boy stood before an all-white jury trying him for his life in a Southern court. His fine head thrown back proudly, he addressed the court:

"I would like to explain in detail the nature of my case, and the reason why I was locked up. Back about the middle part of 1932, the relief agency of the City of Atlanta, and the County Commission and the City Government, were cutting off all relief for the unemployed workers, both white and colored. There were 23,000 of such citizens each day looking for work and there was no work to be found."

The judge peered over his bench in amazement. The Rev. John B. Hudson, prosecutor, half-rose from his seat, then slumped back in impotent rage. The white and Negro people in the crowded courtroom listened, tense, admiring, finger-nails biting into palms as they clenched their fists in solidarity with their young Negro leader who dared to speak boldly for them before the Southern court.

"The Unemployment Council issued a leaflet calling on white and Negro workers to attend a meeting at the Courthouse building Thursday morning.

"This meeting was an answer to the statements handed out to the local press by the County Commissioners, which said that nobody was starving and if anybody was starving he was to come along to their offices and they would look into the matter. . . .

"Our leaflet called on all those who were starving to come down to the Courthouse building. They came. There were unemployed white women with their babies almost naked, and without any shoes to their feet, and there were Negro women with their little starving babies. They came down to the commissioners' office to show that there was starvation in the city of Atlanta. . . .

"The demonstration had its effect. The next day after this demonstration the Commissioners voted \$6,000 for unemployment relief—because the workers had organized themselves, Negro and white together.



"The circulars calling for the demonstration had Post Office Box 339 marked on them. Well, on Monday, July 11, 1932, I went up there to get mail from this box because I was a member and organizer of the Unemployment Council. I went up there to get mail and these two detectives, Mr. Watson and Mr. Chester, were stationed at the instructions of the Solicitor General to lock up whoever came there."

Angelo Herndon went on to tell the all-white jury of his arrest, how he was held incommunicado for 11 days, with no charge against him, how he was held in Fulton Tower jail for six months, how when a Spanish-American war veteran died from the rotten food in jail, his body was left in Herndon's cell. He described this food. He told of the refusal to give him medical care when he himself got sick from the poisonous diet.

Before the whole world, Angelo Herndon defied the white overlords of the South in their own courtroom. Into their teeth he threw the challenge of the working-class:

"You may do what you will with Angelo Herndon. You may indict him. You may put him in jail. But there will come thousands of Angelo Herndons. If you really want to do anything about the case, you must go out and indict the social system. But this you will not do, for your role is to defend the system under which the toiling masses are robbed and oppressed. You may succeed in killing one, two, even a score of working class organizers. But you cannot kill the working class!"

Angelo Herndon sat down again between the two brave Negro attorneys, Ben Davis, Jr., and John Geer, who had conducted his defense in behalf of the International Labor Defense. The eyes of the courtroom turned on the jury as it filed out of the room.

The jury spoke: it recommended "mercy" for Angelo Herndon, as the eyes of the prosecutor gleamed—a "merciful" sentence of 18 to 20 years on the Georgia chain-gang. The judge and prosecutor, and their overlords in higher places, thought the jury had said the last word. The working-class had still a lot to say, however, through the International Labor Defense.



The voice of millions forced the Georgia State Supreme Court to hear an appeal; forced the setting of bail. From the pockets of these millions, at the call of the I.L.D., came \$15,000 in cash, collected in nickles and dimes and pennies in 23 days, to keep Angelo Herndon off the chain-gang pending an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. Herndon travelled over the whole country, speaking on behalf of his own case, and for the Scottsboro boys.

On April 12, the nine old men of the Supreme Court listened to the I.L.D. lawyers argue the appeal for Herndon. Five weeks later they spoke. They covered their shameful action with thousands of long and difficult words. But their answer was the same as Georgia's: Angelo Herndon must go to the chain-gang because he dared question the right of those who rule by murder, robbery, and oppression.

"That is your verdict," said the I.L.D. "It is not final. The fight has just begun. From your costly marble palace the Herndon case will now be taken before the highest court of all, the Supreme Court of the Laboring Masses. Theirs is the final verdict!"

●

The fight for Herndon, on the battle-ground of the world, is being fought now, and millions are engaged in it under the leadership of the I.L.D. It is only one of thousands which the I.L.D. has fought in the last ten years. Even while the Herndon case was being fought, thousands of other battles were being conducted in every corner of the land, in the courtrooms, in the streets—between the might of organized mass pressure, and the power of ruling class justice.

The battle has waged long and fierce. Bigger battles are still to come.

Since the early beginnings of the American labor movement, hundreds of "unknown soldiers" of the class war, victims of ruling class justice, have been railroaded to long prison terms for their loyalty to the working class. Hundreds have been murdered. Thousands of brave fighters in the battle for the right to live have faced the courts of the enemy practically



defenseless. Those imprisoned left behind them wives and children facing hunger and destitution until the ruling class had taken its full measure of revenge against them. The widows and orphans of the murdered fighters were forgotten in the heat of struggle.

History demanded a nation-wide organization, with affiliation all over the world, to aid these victims, and history dictated the date on which the I.L.D. was born.

On June 28, 1925, delegates from trade unions, fraternal organizations, political parties, and existing defense committees gathered together in Chicago to bring into being the International Labor Defense.

The delegates reviewed the work of the past, the attempts that had been made to organize to shield the ranks of the toiling masses against the barrage of oppressive measures from the armory of American capitalism—anti-labor legislation, police clubs, bullets, tear-gas, frame-ups, the electric chair and hangman's noose, and long prison sentences. All that was good in the lessons that the pioneers of labor defense had left as a heritage to the working-class was embodied in the program of the I.L.D. Every effort was made to correct the mistakes and weaknesses, to put into practice the lessons learned at the expense of many costly sacrifices of life and liberty.

Many prominent individuals, leaders of organized labor, among them Eugene V. Debs, William Z. Foster, Bishop William Montgomery Brown, "Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor, who gave many years to building the I.L.D., were elected to the first national committee of the I.L.D. Andrew P. McNamara, of the Pittsburgh, Pa., American Federation of Labor, was chosen as first national chairman of the organization, and he continued to fill that post until the second national convention when he was succeeded by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, fiery veteran of the labor defense movement.

## II. BEFORE THE I.L.D.

Joe Hill, rebel, poet, and organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, organized the miners and the railroad men and



the itinerant agricultural workers. Joe Hill wrote fighting songs for them. Joe Hill was a menace to the bosses. When every other means of silencing him failed, they framed him for the murder of a grocer, J. S. Morrison, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Morrison was killed by two masked robbers on January 10, 1914.

### **The Martyrdom of Joe Hill**

Joe Hill went on trial for his life in June, 1914, with practically no defense. The bourgeois press did not even report the trial. The liberal and Socialist press followed suit—except that the International Socialist Review carried a few lines, buried in the back pages, asking for funds.

The trial was a brutal farce. There was absolutely no evidence against Joe Hill. The jury was packed and the verdict was guilty. On the morning of November 19, 1915, Joe Hill was led into the prison yard and shot down by a firing squad.

His last words were, "Gentlemen, I die with a clear conscience. I never did anything wrong in my life. I die fighting—not like a coward! Goodbye. Fire! Let'er go!"

The day before he died he telegraphed Big Bill Haywood: "Goodbye, Bill. I will die like a true blue rebel. Don't waste any time in mourning. Organize."

Because there was no defense organization, no machinery ready to leap to the protection of a worker framed because he was a fighter, no apparatus to rouse the whole country and the whole world to his support, Joe Hill was murdered.

### **Pre-I. L. D. Defense Committees**

Looking back over the history of the American labor movement—filled with glorious struggles, with traditions of the greatest militancy and determination—we find many stories like that of Joe Hill. We also find many hastily thrown up organizations created to meet the emergencies of aiding those who were victimized for their activity.

Created in the heat of battle, isolated, scattered and sporadic, these defense committees for the most part died as soon as their immediate work was done.

In building their unions American workers had realized the



principle "United we stand, divided we fall"—but it was long before they were able to see the necessity of applying it to defense work.

Immediately after the World War, the forerunner of the present day Red Scare was dragged across the country. A dragnet was set for all "alien trouble makers" and the deportation delirium reached its frenzied height in 1919. The organized labor movement attempted to establish some lasting defense apparatus.

The National Defense Committee was founded in 1920, with Edgar Owens as national secretary. It handled most of the arrests and frame-ups that attended Attorney General Mitchell Palmer's "Red Raids." There was also the Workers Defense Union, founded in 1918, headed by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, active in the Centralia case, in the Winnipeg General Strike, and in the early years of the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Finally, there were the Labor Defense Councils, started in 1922 around the Bridgman, Michigan, case, in which 32 leaders of the Communist Party were arrested and charged with criminal syndicalism. This organization was still in existence in 1925, and sent 23 representatives to the conference which founded the I.L.D. It voted to merge with the new organization as a body.

### III. GROWTH

*"Voices from prison—the graves of living men—will come to thank you for your deeds."*—From a letter written to the I.L.D. in 1926 by Big Bill Haywood, fighter, leader, ex-class war prisoner.

In October, 1925, four months after the I.L.D. was launched, there were 59 branches in the whole country. By November of the same year there were 106, in December 118, and in January, 1926, when the LABOR DEFENDER, official organ of the I.L.D., was launched, there were 128 branches.

The organization literally grew by leaps and bounds. By the middle of 1926 it had 150 branches, and organizations with a total membership of 56,000 were affiliated to it. On its tenth anniversary it has 800 branches, in every state of the Union but one, a membership of 25,000, and a total affiliated membership of 200,000.



The I.L.D. was built on the solid rock of clear-cut program and policy. It set out to make good its promise and its pledge of June 28, 1925, to defend all persecuted for their activity in the labor movement, to defend the struggles of the national minorities, and to support the families of victims of ruling class terror regardless of their color, creed, nationality, or political belief. It proclaimed its policy to be a two-fisted one. It strained every effort and every resource to organize the broadest possible mass defense and mass protest, in the courts themselves, on the streets, in every organization, and to supplement and spur this with the best available legal defense.

The ruling class propaganda about "fairness and justice to all before the law" had taken a strong hold on the minds of the American people. Politics were supposed to be left outside the door of the courthouse like rubbers on a rainy day. The judge in his black robes, the paid press agents of the ruling class would have it, sat in judgment only on the evidence presented to him by both sides. The prosecutor owed a duty to defend justice. The judge or jury deliberated and delivered a verdict, so they said, based on what was shown by both sides.

It was difficult to smash through the dense fog of illusions about the courts. It is still difficult today. But it is a necessary part of the job of organizing working-class defense, and now, as in the early days, the I.L.D. continues to expose the courts as repressive instruments in the hands of the capitalist state.

Painstakingly the I.L.D. seeks to show the masses, by countless living examples, on whose side the courts are. It seeks to show how it is that international crooks like Samuel Insull the banker, murderers of workers like Henry Ford, tyrants who maintain private armies like Rockefeller, Morgan, and Mellon, are never hauled up before the courts and put in jail for their daily offenses—while the courts support thousands of crude frame-ups to put militant toilers in jail, to murder them, to terrorize millions of people; issue hundreds of injunctions smashing strikes and picket lines but never one prohibiting the bosses from using the police, their private armies, the National Guard and the United States Army to shoot down unarmed strikers



and pickets in every part of the country.

The I.L.D. has armed the working-class with another weapon of defense. By clear and simple directions and examples, published in pamphlets, leaflets, and the LABOR DEFENDER, on court-room procedure, legal rights, and the role of the courts, it has been showing American labor how to DEFEND ITSELF IN COURT. It has shown American labor how to turn from accused into accuser in the court, cut through the spider's web of legal technicality, do without a lawyer if necessary, and by exposing the rottenness of every court proceeding against the working class to immeasurably strengthen its defense.

### **Building**

In the midst of its most widespread campaigns, the I.L.D. has always given attention to the task of building an ever greater organization, an ever stronger shield for the working-class. Recruiting has always been one of the main tasks of the I.L.D., and today, when it has reached its tenth anniversary, looking backward over ten years of work and achievement, and looking forward to greater struggles and heavier tasks, it considers the recruitment of new tens of thousands into its ranks to stay as its most important task.

This was its most important task in 1925, and remains so today, multiplied many times in magnitude since 1926 when Big Bill Haywood, himself a political prisoner on many occasions, wrote:

"Tom Mooney, Warren Billings, Jim McNamara, Matt Schmidt, Sacco and Vanzetti, will realize that in the I.L.D. another force has been launched in their support. . . Many of the cases that confront you could have been averted by the organized strength that you will develop. . . Money or lawyers are not the only requirements of legal or real defense. Publicity is your strongest agency, agitation and demonstration, and . . . members. More members. Get them black, red, brown, yellow and white if they are good enough to work for men behind prison bars and their needy mothers, wives, and children.

"One who has been placed in jeopardy as I have been most



keenly feels the power of organization. It is to an expression of solidarity on the part of the workers that I owe my life."



*Mass pressure led by the I.L.D. have saved thousands from prison and death.*



## IV. BATTLES LED BY THE I.L.D.

Bill Haywood was right. Thousands of American workers, farmers, students, are free today because of the work of the I.L.D. Hundreds of them faced long jail sentences, many even death. Most of these cases never saw the limelight of national publicity. But they were fought with the weapons of mobilization, agitation, and fearless exposure of class forces in the courts, wherever they occurred. Thousands were won in the obscurity of little towns and dingy courtrooms, forging new weapons in the hands of the toiling masses in defense of their own.

Only a few of the stories of these battles can be told here, as examples of what has been done, and as lessons to help meet what the future will bring. From the strike wave that has thundered across the country since the Blue Eagle was thrust upon American labor at the point of a bayonet, back to the days of its inception, the I.L.D. has translated its emblem—a shield—into reality by its aid to American labor in struggle.

### **TEXTILES**

Perhaps the greatest of the I.L.D. national campaigns around economic struggles were organized in behalf of textile strikers. Their reverberations resounded from coast to coast and in 1929 across the oceans to Europe and Asia.

"Clear 'em out boys!" The order cracked through the icy air like a whip.

For a moment two lines faced each other. On one side brass-buttoned blue uniforms clutching clubs, tear gas guns, black jacks. On the other a curious procession. At the head a woman with a baby carriage. Directly behind her a group of men in trench helmets and gas masks—the one in the middle holding an American flag—behind them several thousand of Passaic, New Jersey, striking textile workers.

For a moment there was silence. Then the attack began. Clubs cracked down on defenseless heads. Tear gas clouds filled the streets. Policemen scattered men, women and children right and left with savage blows.



Sixteen thousand textile workers had poured out of Passaic's mills on January 25, 1926. Awe-inspiring picket lines of more than two thousand moved back and forth before the machine gun mounted ramparts of the mills for two months, in revolt against starvation wages of \$8 a week and inhuman stretch-out.

On March 1, the mill owners gave the police the high-sign. *Hell In Passaic* became a byword in every part of the country. Fire hoses shot icy water on the picket lines, blinding the workers so that the police could fall on them and club them into insensibility. Arrests followed arrests.

By April 23, 264 were in jail. But the I.L.D. was on the job, with what effect may be noted from the following letter, received by its National Executive Committee from the United Front Committee of Textile Workers:

*"The United Front Committee of Textile Workers, representing the sixteen thousand strikers, wishes to express its warmest appreciation and gratitude to the International Labor Defense for its action in taking the defense, to date, of 264 who have been arrested for their activity in the strike.*

*"The efficient help of the International Labor Defense has given us greater strength and courage to keep up the fight. We appeal to all workers to support the nation-wide protest movement which the I.L.D. is organizing and to contribute to its defense funds.*

*"The bitter persecution we have suffered during the strike and the attempts to railroad our leaders to prison have shown us clearly the great necessity for the International Labor Defense. We give it our unconditional support and endorsement and hope it will be built into an ever stronger shield of the working class.*

*Yours for solidarity,*

*United Front Committee of Textile Workers,  
Gustav Deak, Secretary."*

Seventeen workers were sentenced to a total of 1,365 days. Forty-three were released on bail, 53 were fined a total of \$844.50. Those who were given long sentences were finally freed on parole, long before their terms had expired.

### **Gastonia**

June 7, 1929. A hot sultry night. Two men with ancient shot guns on their shoulders marched back and forth from one end of the tent-covered lot to the other. Inside the tents slept



the strikers and their wives and kids.

The guards looked up to the murky sky and listened to the silent night disturbed only by the whimper of a hungry child, or the groan of a striker beaten on the picket line that day.

The roar of motors came around the corner. Before the guards had time to look around them, men with guns and revolvers in their hands, black stockings with slits for eyes over their faces, but nothing to cover their police uniforms surrounded them. They resisted. There was a scuffle. Somewhere in the dark one of the invaders fired a shot.

It was a signal. Men and women tumbled out of the tents, rubbing the sleep from their eyes. Drunken police stumbled over the flapping canvas, firing their guns at everything that moved. Screams of women and children inside the tents filled the air.

Up in front the shooting suddenly stopped. On the ground lay the body of Chief of Police Aderholt.

Half of the drunken mob led away twenty strike leaders, three of them women. The rest remained behind to burn the bullet-riddled tents. Bullet holes are bad evidence.

Two months before, when the workers left the looms of the textile mills and poured out into the streets, on strike against 12 hours a day of Gastonia, North Carolina, speed up for \$8 and \$10 a week, they received court eviction notices telling them to clear out of their shacks owned by the Loray and Manville Jenckes Mills. Since then they had lived in the tent colony.

The night of June 7th was not the first attack on the strikers' colony. On April 18 another mob smashed into union headquarters which also housed the strike kitchen. They left the roof on the ground for kindling wood and wantonly scattered all the food collected for the strikers over the streets.

Immediately the strike began, the owners of the mills asked their good friend, the millionaire mill-owner Governor Max Gardner, to call out the National Guard. He promptly obliged. The troops arrived and camped inside the mills with tear gas bombs, artillery, machine guns, hand grenades and rifles. A proclamation making it a crime to as much as walk down the street was posted on all telegraph poles.



An array of sixteen slick high-priced lawyers for the prosecution of the arrested strike leaders was provided by Manville-Jenckes. They included the commander in chief of the National Guard and the governor's brother-in-law.

The prosecution clearly put on trial the right to organize. Its questions to the defendants were mostly about their religious and political views. Little effort was made to present state's evidence—which did not exist. Yet the prosecution asked the lives of these fifteen strike leaders for murder. When the chief prosecutor brought a blood spattered effigy of Chief Aderholt in before the jury, it was the last straw. One juror went mad during the trial and the proceedings had to be halted until a new jury panel could be mustered.

The defense campaign circled the globe. Protest meetings were held all over Europe. Literature and leaflets were spread in more than 20 different languages.

After a sharp battle, the I.L.D. won the complete freedom of the three women and jail sentences instead of the death penalty for the rest.

## **MINERS**

Side by side with these battles on the textile front, the I.L.D. was on the job in major struggles in other parts of the country among the miners.

*The I. L. D. works wonders for the prisoners  
And I know it will work wonders for me  
Write and tell them I'm a Harlan County miner  
Depending on the dear old I. L. D.*

Song written by aunt Molly Jackson during the Harlan, Ky.  
Mine strike in 1931.

## **Ziegler**

"And so we feel that it will be best if you elect new officers," the last words, spoken in the well oiled voice of the crooked trade union official were drowned out by a chorus of boos. D. B. Cobb might be the vice-president of the Illinois sub-district of the United Mine Workers of America, but the miners of Ziegler, in the heart of the southern Illinois coal fields, were wise to the ways of such officials.



"No new elections," they yelled.

A fight started in one corner of the hall. Mr. Cobb jumped off the platform, pulled a blackjack out of his pocket and began to use it. He was sufficiently damaged by the miners around him to send him to the hospital for a few days.

A shot rang out in another corner of the hall. Alec Hargis, member of the K.K.K., ex-official of the Ziegler Local No. 992 stood with the smoking pistol in his hand. Mike Sarovich, militant miner, lay at his feet, mortally wounded.

The constabulary arrived and cleared the hall. Within the next few days Frank Corbishley, brother of the president of Local 992, was arrested and charged with the murder of Mike Sarovich. Twenty other miners including President Henry Corbishley were rounded up, locked up and charged with "conspiracy to murder" D. B. Cobb.

The struggle within Local 992 was of many years standing. The militant miners had finally succeeded in electing rank and file officials, cleaning out the corrupted K.K.K. grafters who had held the union in their clutches and embezzled thousands of dollars of its funds.

But the company didn't want progressive leaders either. And when firing their checkweighmen failed to shake the confidence of the miners in their leaders, they requested the top leadership of the U.M.W. of A. to oust Corbishley and the whole progressive group. D. B. Cobb's presence in Ziegler was in response to that call. After listening for four days to evidence which failed to disclose a single reason for removing the union leaders, he deliberated for 20 minutes and decided to sustain the company's demands. The meeting which ended in murder was called to inform the miners of his decision.

A national campaign was launched by the I.L.D. in behalf of the arrested miners and for the support of their families. Thousands of leaflets, pamphlets, publicity exposing the frame-up and mobilizing solidarity behind the betrayal and persecuted miners, were issued.

The defense campaign forced the prosecution to drop charges against all but 15. At the trial only 7 were convicted. They



were sentenced from 1 to 14 years. A stubborn campaign forced their release on parole after they had served one year.

Ziegler was only the first of the miners' struggles to which the I.L.D. gave all the support at its command. Every strike in the coal fields of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Colorado, Kentucky—from 1927 to 1932, saw the active participation of the I.L.D. in the defense of the striking miners.

Tons of protest material was issued and distributed. Thousands of dollars were collected for defense and relief of the prisoners' families. Miners and their children from the embattled areas were toured all over the country to rouse sympathy for the defense of their fellow workers.

They recognized the need for more powerful defense forces. They proceeded to organize their own defense—to build I.L.D. branches in mining communities in every section of the country. Only last year, one of these branches in Pineville, Kentucky, won the release of William Burnett, sentenced to life imprisonment during the historic Harlan, Kentucky, mine war. Its members traveled thousands of miles throughout the state, over mountains and valleys, gathering petitions for his release which they presented to Governor Laffoon.

## **Gallup**

Gallup, New Mexico, the scene of one of the most brutal frame-ups in history, where 10 miners are held for murder because they dared to question the right of the authorities to evict a fellow worker from his home, was in 1933 the scene of one of the greatest victories for mass defense. The miners of Gallup went on strike in 1933. The whole machinery of terror was hurled against them—tear gas, clubs, bullets and even cavalry charging through the picket lines wielding sabres. A bull pen was set up in the middle of the town. Militant pickets and strike leaders were herded behind its barbed wire fences and given arbitrary sentences by the court martial. Several of the sentences were for over a year. But the terror could not break that strike. And when finally the mine owners were forced to sit across the conference table with the strike leaders to talk settlement all the demands of the strikers—wages, hours, union



recognition were granted except one—the immediate unconditional release of all those arrested. The bosses refused to accede to this. The committee refused to settle the strike. Mass defense raised to the highest level. Within a few days all those in the bull pen and in the jails of Santa Fe and Albuquerque to which they had been sent, were released.

## **AGRICULTURAL WORKERS**

The descendents of the feudal land owners who sought to crush all resistance with jail sentences and murder also found that the I.L.D. was a powerful opponent to reckon with.

In the summer of 1913, 2,300 hop pickers, of Wheatland, California, men, women and children, went on strike against the low wages and inhuman conditions under which the ranch owner, Ralph Durst forced them to exist. He agreed to receive their committee but the minute they entered the office, he fired the leaders and slapped Richard Ford, spokesman, in the face with his glove. This blow served as a signal for Durst's armed guard and a sheriff's posse to order the peaceful gathering to disperse by opening fire upon it. Inside of 15 minutes four men were dead and half a dozen wounded. Two of those slain were the district attorney of the county and a deputy sheriff. The other two were hop pickers. No one was prosecuted for the murder of the two workers, but six hop pickers were charged with the murder of the district attorney and the deputy, and two of them, Richard Ford and Herman Suhr were tried and sentenced to life imprisonment—though they were not actually accused of the killings. No attempt was even made to show that either of them owned or carried a gun.

Ten years later, the entire jury which found them guilty signed a statement declaring their belief in Suhr's innocence and recommending his pardon. Nothing happened. Ford was paroled about the same time but the minute he stepped outside the gates of Folsom penitentiary he was re-arrested, on a warrant charging him with the death of the deputy sheriff.



This was all before 1925. In April 1926 the I.L.D. won the acquittal of Ford who was put on trial on this new warrant. And shortly after, Suhr was freed too.

### **Imperial Valley**

Throughout the "No Man's Land" of Imperial Valley, where every semblance of civil rights has been destroyed and vigilantes openly ride the roads and scatter terror among the agricultural workers and those who try to organize them against starvation, the I.L.D. has been able to win freedom for many victims.

In 1932, California's vigilantes were determined to halt once and for all the attempts to organize the agricultural workers who slaved in Imperial Valley.

They rounded up 8 leaders of this movement, by raiding their meeting and sentenced them to 3 to 42 years in California's dungeons on charges of criminal syndicalism. But every one of the eight was released before his time was up.

### **IN DEFENSE OF NEGRO RIGHTS**

In the ten years from 1925 to 1935 the rulers of the rope and faggot learned that lynching law, mob violence, divide and rule,—wholesale terror against the Negro people, would have to reckon with a powerful foe. Simultaneously with its defense work on the economic front the I.L.D. became the champion and defender of countless victims of national oppression.

The whole world knows of the series of victories won by the I.L.D. in the Scottsboro case. More than four years now, the lynch rulers of Alabama have attempted the legal murder of nine innocent Negro boys on the time honored and traditional charge of rape. Immediately after eight of them were sentenced to death in Scottsboro, Alabama in April 1931, the I.L.D. began a fight that has spread to every country in the world—a fight against frame-up methods, against oppression of the Negro people, against systematic and illegal discrimination and denial of rights to the Negro people.

From the sleepy town of Scottsboro, the I.L.D. fought the case to the United States Supreme Court, winning a new trial





*An I.L.D. meeting in the heart of lynch land.*

there in 1932. Back it went to Alabama where through two trials the I.L.D. battled for the lives of the boys, fighting relentlessly against the exclusion of Negroes from the juries that tried them; and on again to the highest court in the land, where in April 1935 the nine old men who are supposed to be the guard-



ians of our constitutional rights were forced to admit that the Negro people had been systematically deprived of their constitutional rights, and that the indictments in the trials which sentenced Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris, to death—were illegal. The Negroes have been “granted” the right they were supposed to have had through all the years since the Civil War, to sit on juries. But this paper victory is not the end of the journey. Scottsboro has become a banner that is carried at the head of the Negro liberation movement on its road to unconditional freedom of the Scottsboro boys and full rights, full equality for the oppressed Negro people.

During the four years of the Scottsboro case, the I.L.D. has conducted several nation-wide campaigns in behalf of victims of national oppression. A thunderous protest campaign was organized across the land denouncing the murder of Ralph Gray, leader of the sharecroppers at Camp Hill, Alabama, in 1931 and forcing the freedom of a score of croppers held in jail there while lynch mobs were organized. The slave holders quaked before the storm of protest aroused against the legal murder of the aged Euel Lee in 1933, charged with the murdering of a white neighbor in Maryland; the slaughter of three sharecroppers at Tallapoosa during a pitched battle with a lynch posse which came to seize the work animals of Cliff James.

Lynch terror is not confined to the Black Belt of the South. It is fanned into fury by the white oppressors wherever the Negro people live. During recent years it has reached for victims in Detroit, New York, Oregon, Minneapolis. In many cases the I.L.D. saved its intended victims. James Victory in Detroit, framed as a mythical Negro fiend created by Detroit's gutter press, was acquitted after the I.L.D. organized and conducted the broadest united front defense in his behalf. Theodore Jordan, Oregon railroad worker, framed on a charge of murdering a white conductor, was saved from death in the electric chair by an I.L.D. campaign. So were William Hardiman and James Johnson who were charged with murder for having the courage to defend themselves against a mob which came to lynch them. Both were freed.



## A FEW OF THOSE WHO WERE SAVED FROM DEPORTATION

"Send us your huddled masses yearning to be free—" is the message graven in stone on the Statue of Liberty. That fair lady has become not an emblem of welcome to these huddled masses but an image of farewell—the last thing they see when they are deported from the country which they helped to build. Protection of the foreign-born, fighting against their deportation and for their right of asylum in the United States has been another of the constant campaigns of I.L.D.

The Borich twins are well acquainted with the offices of the Department of Labor. From their earliest infancy until the age of 3 they made repeated trips with their mother to tell the Department of Immigration that if the supporter of their family, Frank Borich was deported to Yugoslavia they would be left to starve and their home would be shattered.

Frank Borich was brought to this country from Yugoslavia by his father when he was 13 years old. They settled in a Pennsylvania mining town where Frank went to work at once in the black pit. In 1919 he joined the union and from that day on became one of the staunchest fighters in its ranks. In the course of the miners' struggles, not only against the coal barons but against the reactionary leadership of the United Mine Workers of America, the more militant miners formed the National Miners Union. In 1930 Frank Borich became its leader. That was enough for the Department of Labor. They decided that the N.M.U. "advocated the overthrow of the American government" and therefore its leader must be deported. For years the I.L.D. fought the immigration officials every step of the way, until Frank Borich's warrant was cancelled.

Edith Berkman, frail but fiery young organizer of American Textile workers, brought the wrath of the immigration department down upon her head during the Lawrence Massachusetts textile strike in 1931. They decided that she must be deported to Poland. Though she contracted tuberculosis as a result of



the brutal treatment she received, they would not relax their hold until they forced to do so by a mass protest movement organized by the I.L.D. She is still in this country.

It was not until after the World War, that the deportation menace became a real weapon in the hands of the bosses to hold over the heads of the 14,000,000 foreign born population of the United States. Up until that time, the waves of foreign-born immigrants were welcomed because they formed a huge reservoir of cheap labor to build the mines and mills and railroads.

The I.L.D. throughout the ten years of its existence has jealously guarded one of the supposedly inalienable rights of the American people—the right of a foreign-born worker to stay in the United States which he helped to build, the right of asylum here for those facing political persecution in their native lands. And now in the path of advancing fascism, when the drive against the foreign-born is becoming one of its most obvious heralds, to send the foreign-born “back where he came from,” the fight against deportations and for the right of asylum is becoming one of the outstanding battles of the I.L.D.

## **V. I.L.D. AROUND THE WORLD**

The work of the I.L.D. was never confined to the borders of the United States, because terror and persecution is not confined to those borders. Realizing the necessity of developing international solidarity the I.L.D. in 1927 became affiliated with the International Red Aid as its American Section.

### **The I.R.A.**

In September 1922, the Society of Old Bolsheviks and Former Political Exiles and Prisoners met together in the Soviet Union and discussed the necessity of establishing an international defense and relief organization. These staunch old revolutionists, released from the frozen tundras of Siberia and the grim dungeons of Czarist terror on March 12, 1917, by the Russian workers and farmers who overthrew the Czar and his whole corrupted rule, knew the strength and need of organized defense.

Despite the cruel terror of the Czar, their fellow workers in Russia and their comrades who were fortunate enough to escape to other countries, banded together into organized groups to



raise funds to help those who remained behind. They decided to be the initiators of a world wide workers defense and relief movement. Today, the International Red Aid has over fourteen million individual members in seventy-three countries, organized into as many national sections.

The largest section of the I. R. A. is the Soviet Union Section called MOPR (International Organization to Aid Revolutionaries), which has over eight million members.

In 1934 alone, following the ravages of Hitler's Brown hordes in Germany and the Saar and of their imitators in Austria and Spain, the MOPR spent more than three million roubles in the care of anti-fascist refugees and their children. The right of asylum they receive in the land of the Soviets is more than mere protection of their lives. Here the valiant fighters enjoy all political and trade union rights, all the cultural opportunities provided Soviet citizens. Every effort is strained to restore them physically and to assure such development as will, in time, fit them to return to their posts in the fight against fascism and imperialism.

In addition to these huge sums of money, spent for the refugees and their families, the MOPR (Soviet I.L.D.) raised and sent millions of shillings to the heroic Shutzbunders in Austria, and three millions French francs for the October fighters in Spain's Asturias.

The American I.L.D. has always taken an active part in the International campaigns conducted by the I. R. A. In 1926 when Matthias Rakosi, recently sentenced to life imprisonment by the Hungarian fascist rulers, was first put on trial for his life because he was one of the leaders of the short lived Hungarian Soviets, the gallows was cheated of its prey, because the sections of the I. R. A., including the American I.L.D., roused such an international storm of protest against the death sentence. He received instead eight and a half years imprisonment. The Hungarian fascists were not content and after his time was up, indicted him on new charges—criminal charges of arson, counterfeiting and murder, and demanded his life for the second time. Again world wide protest halted the executioners arm,



but this time the fascists sentenced him to life imprisonment. The fight for his freedom goes on.

The American I.L.D. was particularly active in the struggle against Hitler's fascist terror and especially in defense of its thousands of victims. The world-wide movement for the freedom of Dimitroff and the others accused of burning the Reichstag, and Ernst Thaelmann, the leader of the German working class who still faces the Nazi axe, was carried across the United States by the branches of the I.L.D.

Delegations haunted the Nazi consulates, telephone protest tied up their business, picket lines marched as a constant reminder to Hitler's agents that the victims of the Brown terror had millions of supporters and friends in every corner of the globe. Dozens were arrested and served jail sentences for their solidarity, but the I.L.D. has never permitted the fight for the freedom of Thaelmann, the Ruegg and the other thousands of prisoners tortured in China's jails, in Cuban dungeons, in Austrian and Polish concentration camps, in deepest Africa, to die. Through every channel at its command raising funds, sending delegations, sending lawyers the I.L.D. has organized international solidarity in defense of victims of ruling class terror all over the world.

## VI. IN DEFENSE OF LABOR'S HEROES

*"Remember you're outside for us  
While we're inside for you."*

From one of Joe Hill's famous songs.

While hundreds of thousands were mobilized in defense campaigns by the I.L.D. to keep countless heroes of the class war out of jail, in mining towns, textile centers, in the countryside, in the great cities, never for one day during the ten years of its existence has the I.L.D. forgotten labor's heroes behind the bars, nor for one moment left the battle for their freedom.

### **Mooney-Billings**

When the I.L.D. was formed Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings had already served eight years of their life sentences. Since 1925 national tours organized by the I.L.D. have crossed



the United States time after time, raising the cry "Free Mooney and Billings." Mooney's mother addressed hundreds of thousands at meetings organized by the I.L.D. She went to Europe to carry the plea for her son's freedom back to the shores from which she came to this country long years ago. She spoke at the First World Congress of the International Red Aid in 1932 with Mrs. Ada Wright, mother of two of the Scottsboro Boys, rallying all the national sections of the International Red Aid to support the campaign.

### **Sacco-Vanzetti**

By June, 1925, Sacco and Vanzetti had been in jail for almost five years. The legal battles against their frame-up had travelled from the lowest to the highest courts of Massachusetts. Mountains of evidence had been collected to show that Sacco and Vanzetti, "the poor fish peddler and the lowly shoemaker" had been far away from the scenes of the mercenary crimes for which they were tried and convicted. Thousands had learned to revere and love the quiet courage of these two men who would not surrender their principles even though these were being openly used against them to send them to their deaths in the electric chair.

The Sacco-Vanzetti case became a battle between the American bourgeoisie riding on top of the wave of post-war prosperity and the world-wide protest of the working-class and its sympathizers.

By the time the I.L.D. entered the case, the various Sacco-Vanzetti defense committees had squandered five years in useless and confusing capitulation to illusions in bourgeois justice. "Don't annoy the courts, don't antagonize the governor," had become the slogans of the defense rather than "storm the heavens to free Sacco and Vanzetti."

The I.L.D. mobilized nation-wide protest meetings. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets gathered hundreds of thousands of people into the streets and meeting halls of the land to demand freedom for their fellow workers. Native and foreign-born, side by side, collected funds, passed resolutions, finally went on



strike in many sections of the country for the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti—the “anarchist bastards” whom Massachusetts capitalism was determined to kill.

But the answer to Vanzetti’s call for “a million men” came too late. And an outraged working-class all over the world raised its voice in anguished protest on August 22, 1927 when two heroic lives were burned out in Massachusetts. Their names remain as symbols of the heroes which the working-class can produce.

### **J. B. McNamara**

J. B. McNamara, the oldest political prisoner in the world, watched the formation of the I.L.D. from behind San Quentin’s walls. He had already been in for 14 years, serving a life sentence on the charge of dynamiting the Los Angeles Times in 1910.

To tell the whole story of the McNamara case is to tell the story of the American trade union movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, its struggles, its methods, its leaders and misleaders. J. B. was one of its heroes. He was ready to risk his life at any moment if he was convinced that it would in any way advance the cause of the working-class.

He was arrested together with his brother, J. J. McNamara, and charged with engineering an explosion that cost the lives of 21 men. Organized labor rallied to their defense. Committees dotted the country.

When the trial had been in progress for three months, and greater support was mounting behind the McNamaras every day, certain misguided liberals, and the corrupted leadership of the A. F. of L. made a deal with the open-shop bosses of California. They bargained for an open door to the trade unions in California against a plea of “guilty” from the McNamaras. J. B. was opposed to the deal. But when he was convinced that pleading “guilty” would be the only way to assure trade union organization in California and save the lives and freedom of a whole host of trade unionists, he reluctantly agreed.

What followed was one of the greatest betrayals in labor history. All those who benefited by their sacrifice turned against



the McNamaras, denounced them, slandered them and sought to bury their memory as their bodies were buried in San Quentin's cells.

But J. B. never forgot the working-class nor lost faith in its ultimate goal. During his 24 year imprisonment he has developed into a real revolutionist. His splendid courage, his indomitable spirit is an inspiration to all who know him.

Around the fight for the freedom of these heroes of labor, one of the most important tasks of the I.L.D., revolves the struggle to gain recognition of their status as political prisoners with special privileges and conditions for them as such. Our enlightened legal system does not recognize political prisoners—it is based on the frame-up system and according to the letter of the law No. 31921 in San Quentin is a murderer doing a life term. His name is Tom Mooney.

The fight against this degrading hypocrisy which lays our political prisoners open to all sorts of torture—physical and mental—is one of the constant campaigns of the I.L.D. It is also closely linked with our most vital task—providing adequate relief to the prisoners while they are in jail and support to the wives and children they leave behind them.

Smokes, newspapers, food to break the dreadful monotony of prison diet, mean a lot to a man behind the bars. Without the money he receives regularly from our Prisoners' Relief Department he could get none of these small comforts. But even more important than these, is the peace of mind that comes from knowing his family is receiving some sort of regular support. He knows that relief agencies discriminate against his family. He knows how his wife must struggle to feed and clothe the children. And if every reader of this pamphlet could see the hundreds of letters that come to the Prisoners' Relief Department from the prisoners and their families filled with gratitude for this material solidarity with those who gave their freedom, they would quickly realize why our slogan **THEY GAVE THEIR FREEDOM, GIVE THEM YOUR SUPPORT**—is the most significant battle cry of the International Labor Defense.



Remembering the words of the Haymarket martyrs, spoken on the scaffold in Chicago in 1887, "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are strangling today," the I.L.D. has pledged itself to keep the voices of the victims of ruling class justice—loud and ringing from the tomb, from prison, from chain gangs.

On its tenth anniversary the I.L.D. renews its solemn pledge to the martyrs of the past, to the victims of today, to the heroes of tomorrow—"We will not forget. We will not permit you to be forgotten. We will battle on until you are free."

## VII. WHAT HAS NOT BEEN TOLD

Hundreds of cases, hundreds of unsung heroes, had to be left out of this short survey touching a few of the highest peaks of the work of the I.L.D. during the last ten years.

Branches of the I.L.D. scattered all over the country have conducted many splendid defense campaigns in their localities. Districts (of which there are 20) have conducted battles within their territories that have had results reaching way beyond their boundaries. In December 1933 the Philadelphia district succeeded in organizing a half-hour Scottsboro protest strike in the cleaning and dyeing industry throughout the city. The Southern district of the I.L.D. with its center in Birmingham, the heart of lynch land, has conducted defense work under conditions of practical illegality. The members meet in the woods, in the back rooms of workers' shacks, in churches. They have to evade the police and the Klan at every turn, but their work goes on.

The tremendous International Labor Defense campaign against the anti-labor criminal syndicalist laws that exist in 33 states has been conducted almost exclusively by the district apparatus in the states.

The California district is at the present time engaged in a real war against California Criminal syndicalist law. They have won many allies for the struggle and have succeeded in building one of the broadest united front movements this country has ever seen, involving even important sections of the Democratic



Party, the Utopian Leagues, trade unions of the American Federation of Labor, etc. The nucleus of this campaign was the defense fight behind the Sacramento cases where eighteen young organizers were put on trial together with the right to organize trade unions in California. Eight, including 3 women are now serving 1 to 14 year sentences pending appeal.

The most important picture of ten years of the I.L.D. that we hope to leave with the readers of this pamphlet, is a picture of constant action. Every day, every minute of the day, the I.L.D. is on the job in every part of the country defending those who are being persecuted for their working-class activity, for their political beliefs or because of their race, color or nationality. On any one day looking over the country we find the I.L.D. engaged at the same time in fighting deportation warrants here, organizing defense against frame-up justice there. At the moment of writing the I.L.D. is fighting on many nation-spanning fronts. It is defending six textile workers in Burlington, N. C. framed-up on a charge of dynamiting a textile mill during the general textile strike last September. This frame-up was the final attempt of the Burlington textile barons to break the strike. It is preparing the next steps in the Scottsboro case. On the coast it is working on appeals for the Sacramento defendants. It is preparing the defense of 10 miners indicted in Gallup, N. M., for murder.

Every day brings new tasks and new responsibilities. Developing fascism is rapidly increasing the rate of number of persecutions. Every day brings new voices from prison to the I.L.D., new victims to defend and support new families to take care of and encourage. The work of the past was made possible by the generous support of millions of friends, reached through the channels of the sympathetic press.

The future holds new major battles in store for the I.L.D. and on this its 10th anniversary it calls on every worker, every intellectual—men and women, native and foreign-born, Negro and white—to rally to the banner of the only working-class defense organization in the United States.

Organize your defense! JOIN THE I.L.D.



## Fellow Workers:

This pamphlet is only one of the many ways in which the **INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE** is trying to organize the workers against oppression and persecution. There is only one guarantee that the **INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE** will be in a position to carry out its working class task of organizing the defense of the workers and the support of the Political Prisoners and their families, and that is only if we will have a mass **INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE** of hundreds of thousands of workers and their friends, and supported by still larger numbers of workers.

**THEREFORE** if you want to help guarantee that the **INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE** will be able to defend all class war prisoners, and support the Political Prisoners and their families:

**JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE!**

**SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE!**

Tear this stub off and fill out the other side of it and bring or send it to the nearest branch of the International Labor Defense or to *International Labor Defense*, 80 E. 11th St., N. Y. C.

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**Tear This off and Keep at All Times**

### **IF ARRESTED—REMEMBER THESE POINTS:**

1. Give *no* information to officers. Only a name.
2. Plead *Not Guilty* and demand a jury trial.
3. Demand that the *International Labor Defense* defend you.
4. Insist that you be out on your own recognizance; if they refuse this, demand that bail be set low.
5. Demand a copy of the complaint.
6. Do not sign anything.

Carry on your working-class fight in the jail and in court.

Read "What to Do When Under Arrest" which can be bought for one cent. It gives more information on what to do when under arrest.

Hold classes in your I.L.D. branch, organization, in small study groups of workers, on workers' defense.



I, the undersigned, would like to become a member of the  
International Labor Defense.

Name ..... Date.....

Address ..... City.....

Age..... Where do you work? .....

Union, political or fraternal affiliation .....

Unemployed initiation 5c plus 2c for the book.

Employed initiation 25c plus 2c for the book.

Employed dues—20c per month, unemployed 2c per month.

If you do not want to become a member of the International  
Labor Defense but wish to support it, write S. on this and  
check the following ways in which you are willing to support  
the I.L.D.

Monthly pledge to Political Prisoners' Relief. ....

Will buy the Labor Defender if it is delivered to me.....

Will donate to the various campaigns of the I.L.D.....

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